

## Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4706

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, NP

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER SPEAKS ON EVE OF VISIT TO INDIA

1. PRIME MINISTER TULSI GIRI MET WITH NEPALESE AND FOREIGN PRESS CORPS APRIL 4 FOR TWO-HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE TALKED EXTEMPORANEOUSLY INTER ALIA ON HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO INDIA. REPEATING THEME HE DEVELOPED SHORTLY AFTER HAVING TAKEN OFFICE, GIRI SAID HE HOPED HIS VISIT WOULD INITIATE "OPEN AND FRANK TALKS WITH INDIAN LEADERS IN A TRUE SPIRIT OF GIVE AND TAKE."

2. PRIME MINISTER STRUCK AN OPTIMISTIC NOTE, SAYING THAT GOI FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN'S VISIT IN JANUARY HAD PROVED THAT "NO PROBLEMS WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES COULD NOT BE OVERCOME." HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT ONCE THIS BASIC UNDERSTANDING "WAS MOLDED IN A FRAMEWORK EVERYTHING COULD GO FORWARD SMOOTHLY." HE REITERATED HMG VIEW THAT, DESPITE ACTIONS IT MIGHT TAKE AS A SOVERIGN STATE, NEPAL DID NOT INTEND TO DO ANYTHING PREJUDICIAL TO INDIAN INTERESTS. IF SUCH MISUNDERSTANDINGS AROSE FROM TIME TO TIME THEY SHOULD BE OPENLY EXPLAINED BY BOTH SIDES. HE ALSO STATED THAT NEPAL "DID NOT HAVE A PROBLEM OF BALANCING

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BETWEEN TWO FRIENDLY STATES." NEPAL'S RELATIONS WITH

EITHER OF ITS NEIGHBORS WAS PURELY A BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WHICH NEED NOT AFFECT NEPAL'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER FRIENDLY STATES. REPLYING TO A QUESTION THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT EFFORTS TO SEPARATE ECONOMIC FROM POLITICAL ISSUES WOULD PROVE IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES.

3. TURNING TO SPECIFICS OF HIS UPCOMING TALKS WITH MRS. GANDHI, GIRI SAID THAT NEPAL WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR UNDERSTANDING OF ITS DESIRE TO BE DECLARED A ZONE OF PEACE. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT THERE WAS NO URGENCY IN THIS MATTER AND THAT HMG WOULD, IF NECESSARY, EXPLAIN ITS UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPT "AGAIN AND AGAIN," BUT WOULD NOT BRING THE ISSUE UP AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE.

4. HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT GOING TO INDIA IN ORDER TO NEGOTIATE ON TRADE AND TRANSIT ISSUES, IMPLYING THAT THESE QUESTIONS WOULD BE DISCUSSED BY SUBORDINATES AFTER HIS "FRANK POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS." AS FOR BILATERAL COOPERATION IN DEVELOPING NEPAL'S HYDROELECTRIC POTENTIAL, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT JOINT COOPERATION IN SUCH PROJECTS,, INCLUDING KARNALI, WOULD BE IN THE INTERESTS OF BOTH STATES AND WOULD BE A RIGHT STEP TOWARDS MEANINGFUL COOPERATION. GIVEN NEPAL'S GROWING EXPERIENCE IN SUCH PROJECTS THE QUESTION OF NEPAL'S BEING "PUT AT A DISADVANTAGE COULD POSSIBLY BE SET ASIDE."

5. HE DENIED CURRENT REPORTS THAT NEPAL WOULD ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BHUTAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE BUT ADDED THAT "IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS RELATIONS COULD BE ESTABLISHED SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE." HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN GOI ASSURANCES THAT IT WOULD NOT ALLOW ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS AGAINST NEPAL BY NEPALI CONGRESS PARTY ELEMENTS IN EXILE.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS LITTLE NEW IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENTS BEYOND THAT WHICH HE EPXRESSED IN HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE LAST DECEMBER URGING A NEW DIALOGUE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITH INDIA. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THE GIRI WILL MEET INDIAN RESISTANCE TO HIS CONCEPT THAT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD BE DELINKED, NOR DO WE SHARE HIS PUBLIC OPTIMISM THAT ONCE A POLITICAL DIALOGUE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ECONOMIC AND OTHER BILATERAL ISSUES CAN QUICKLY BE RESOLVED. EAVES

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